

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20510

March 24, 2021

Rochelle Walensky, Director
Centers for Disease Control & Prevention
1600 Clifton Road
Atlanta, GA, 30329-4027

Dr. Francis Collins, Director
National Institutes of Health
9000 Rockville Pike
Bethesda, Maryland 20892

Directors Walensky and Collins:

Even while our country continues to grapple with the public health crisis posed by the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, recent events have forced us to again confront another urgent public health crisis facing America: gun violence.

As you know, Congress voted in 2018 to authorize the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and National Institutes of Health (NIH) to conduct research into the root causes of America's gun violence epidemic and identify potential solutions to help address it. In 2019 and 2020, Congress appropriated \$25 million in each year to fund such research, split evenly between your two organizations.

We understand that after decades of disinvestment the work will not be easy, and answers will not come quickly. We write, however, to request a status report on how that funding is being used, when that research may yield actionable information for policymakers, and what – if any – limitations you face due to budgetary or other constraints. This research has the potential to save scores of innocent lives, and we stand ready to do what is necessary to make sure it can be done expeditiously, effectively, and comprehensively.

America can confront any challenge when we band together in common purpose and with a common goal. When we wanted to reduce the alarming number of fatal motor vehicle accidents, we did it. When we wanted to reduce smoking-related illnesses and deaths, we did it. And we believe all Americans – no matter their political affiliation or interpretations of the Second Amendment – want to see fewer people killed by guns in this country. We can do that, too – and we thank you for your leadership in helping to make that dream a reality through rigorous research and scientific investigation.

Thank you for all you and your organizations do to help save lives, no matter the threat. We look forward to your continued engagement on this urgent public health and public safety crisis.

Sincerely,

A stylized signature of Dean Phillips, featuring a large 'D' and a long horizontal stroke.

Dean Phillips
Member of Congress

A cursive signature of Earl Blumenauer in blue ink.

Earl Blumenauer
Member of Congress

A cursive signature of Tony Cárdenas in blue ink.

Tony Cárdenas
Member of Congress

A bold, blocky signature of Ed Case in blue ink.

Ed Case
Member of Congress

A cursive signature of Mark DeSaulnier in blue ink.

Mark DeSaulnier
Member of Congress

A cursive signature of Lois Frankel in blue ink.

Lois Frankel
Member of Congress

/s/ Sheila Jackson Lee

Sheila Jackson Lee
Member of Congress

A cursive signature of Andy Levin in blue ink.

Andy Levin
Member of Congress

A cursive signature of Betty McCollum in blue ink.

Betty McCollum
Member of Congress

A cursive signature of Juan Vargas in blue ink.

Juan Vargas
Member of Congress